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ABSTRACT

Since 1910, the Library of Congress (LC) has collected state publications and announced them in its Monthly Checklist. Over 26,000 titles were listed in 1973, but this does not represent a complete record of official state publications. If a state does not have a law requiring that a copy of each publication issued be sent to the LC, the coverage tends to be sparse. At times, the Checklist staff must locate and request publications individually. Not everything in the Checklist is retained by LC; only items of substantive content are integrated into the general collection. The Library of Congress needs state cooperation to improve the coverage of the Checklist. (PF)

MONTHLY CHECKLIST OF STATE PUBLICATIONS

PAPER PRESENTED TO
GODORT STATE DOCUMENTS TASK FORCE
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
July 8, 1974

by

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MONTHLY CHECKLIST OF STATE PUBLICATIONS

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Publication of the Monthly Checklist of State Publications is one of the three basic functions of the State Documents Section. The others are to acquire for listing in the Checklist the publications issued during the last five years by the States, the District of Columbia, U. S. possessions and interstate agencies; and, from the materials acquired, to select the monographs to be added to the Library's permanent collections.

To collect and make available documents on as comprehensive a scale as possible is one of the essential services rendered by the Library of Congress. In addition to the publications of governments at the national level, the publications of the American State governments are an integral part of this scheme of essential service in the Library. In 1910 the Library initiated a program to acquire and make available the current State publications. The success of the Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications, issued by the Government Printing Office, had pointed the way toward a solution to the problem. Accordingly the Library decided to prepare a listing, and in January 1910 issued the first number of the Monthly Checklist of State Publications. The Library's problems in obtaining over-all coverage of State documents were infinitely greater than those experienced by the Superintendent of Documents in assemblying Federal publications for the Monthly Catalog.

It may be of interest to quote what Dr. Herbert Putnam, then Librarian of Congress, had to say regarding the Checklist. Under the date of December 15, 1909, in a circular letter addressed to State librarians and other officers charged with the distribution of State documents, he stated:

> "...it is believed that a catalog of this character... would be of value to State libraries and legislative reference departments and also to many university and city libraries, public officials and students of social and political science. The success of such an undertaking would obviously depend on the cooperation of state libraries and other officers charged with the distribution of documents."

The interest of the State librarians and their willingness to assist in making the record comprehensive in every way practicable have in large measure met Dr. Putnam's expectations of more than 64 years ago. Although the Checklist is still not a complete record of all the official publications of the States, it does constitute the only consolidated current listing of these publications and is an important segment of the national bibliography. We listed 26,409 titles during calendar year 1973, an average of 2,200 titles per issue.

There has been a general movement toward establishing depository library systems within the States, and almost all the

depositories have been made responsible for furnishing State documents to the Library. State legislation requiring distribution to the Library has also proved to be a most effective means of broadening the Checklist's coverage. In some States where there is neither a depository system nor a specific distribution law, it is known that state libraries find it difficult to obtain copies of all the publications issued by every agency of their own State government.

The State Documents Section makes every effort to ascertain what is being issued, and to acquire copies. In States lacking a central source or a distribution law, the Section attempts to contact each agency to request its publications and to have the Library placed on its mailing list. We recently compared against our receipts a State checklist from a state having no depository system and found we had not received nearly 80% of their documents. Request letters were mailed to each agency and we hope to receive a large number of the documents. Since July 1 of last year we have searched against our receipts 6,761 titles and requested 3,279 of these titles which we had not received. In addition, the Library's Reference Department is constantly forwarding to us requests for State documents which have appeared in professional journals or newspapers and recommending them for the Library's collections. Here again we find a high percentage of these titles were never received and must be requested.

One of the difficulties in the bibliographical control of State documents is the never-ending problem of determining when the agencies were created, abolished and/or reorganized. To aid us with this problem the current session laws of each State are reviewed for newly created agencies, and letters briefly explaining the purpose of the Checklist and requesting their documents are sent to them. Blue-books and manuals as well as daily newspapers are examined to note the establishment of a new agency, the reorganization of State governments, or any other factors which may have a bearing on publications issued. Notice of a new project undertaken by an agency, for instance, may indicate that the results of that project will be published. Constant efforts are made to keep informed on changes in governments, to maintain contacts with the appropriate individuals in the State organizations, and, above all, to see that as much as possible of the material published by State and territorial governments is acquired by the Library of Congress.

Material to be listed in the Checklist is segregated daily from other incoming mail in the Exchange and Gift Division. Not only does this include documents forwarded by the State libraries and other State agencies but also includes copyright depository, All-the-Books program material (that is, complimentary copies of books needed to prepare printed cards), and transfer material from other Federal agencies. The coverage of the Checklist extends to the Territories

and insular possessions of the U. S., as well as to associations of State officials and to interstate organizations. In addition to documents issued by the various departments, bureaus, and other administrative agencies of State governments, the publications listed include those of State-supported universities and colleges and of organizations subsidized wholly or in part by State funds, such as agricultural and historical societies. A few categories of publications, such as college and university catalogs, loose-leaf additions, slip laws and certain ephemeral material such as blank forms and publishers' announcements, are not listed in the Checklist. Listings of State university press publications are limited to those which by reason of their content or series appear to be official publications of the university.

The Checklist is a record of State documents issued during the last five years which have been received by the Library of Congress. Monographs and serials are listed as they are received and are arranged by State and issuing agency. Periodicals are listed semiannually in the June and December issues, with the December list cumulative for the year. Publications of associations of State officials and of regional organizations, and library surveys, studies, manuals and statistical reports appear in separate sections at the end of the listing by State.

For each publication, the price and other pertinent information (such as changes in titles and in names of issuing bodies) are given when known. The Library of Congress card number is also given at the end of the entry when available.

The annual index is arranged alphabetically for facilitating reference to issuing agencies and subjects. Subjects are assigned using the Library's Subject Headings Used in the Dictionary Catalogs and a few categories which we feel are more descriptive, such as "State manuals." We realize there is a need to make the index available on a more current basis. The automation of the index is currently under study.

As an accessions list, the Checklist includes entries for all State documents except the few categories previously mentioned. Everything that is listed is not, however, selected for retention in the permanent collections of the Library of Congress. The Library's Acquisition Policy Statement Number 5 says:

> "Selection of State publications for the permanent collections shall be made solely on the basis of substantial subject content, but, with the exception of legislative bills, all administrative reports of inter-state officers and agencies and all publications issued by State legislative, judicial and quasi-judicial bodies shall be retained. Publications

of limited usefulness or which provide information on subjects adequately covered by other publications in the Library of Congress will not be added to the collections. The foregoing statement applies especially to work in the fields of clinical medicine and technical agriculture."

On the basis of this statement I select monographs to be added to the collections and/or to be cataloged. Although we acquire a wide selection of State documents for listing in the Checklist, we are selective in what we retain. We would not catalog publications of limited usefulness such as preliminary reports, summaries, draft reports, or items which are already in the Library on microfilm. Monographs in loose-leaf form which are meant to be updated by inserts are not retained, except legal material. We do catalog, for example, administrative reports, legislative hearings, bibliographies, statistical reports, monographs on the economy, law enforcement, social conditions and similar materials on the State level. We do not catalog monographs on the local level concerning such subjects as zoning.

We assigned 1,651 card numbers to monographs listed in the first six issues of 1974. In the May issue for example, 50% of the monographs listed were selected for cataloging. Selection for permanent retention is made on the basis of the contents of the documents. Monographic series not selected for individual cataloging are sometimes retained in collected sets. What is retained is integrated

into the regular collections of the Library; we have no separate documents collection. The publications selected for the permanent collections and for individual cataloging are assigned an LC card number. The selection of new serial titles such as annual reports and periodicals are not made prior to their first listing in the Checklist. The serials are forwarded to our Serial Record Division after listing in the Checklist. The Selection Office reviews the State documents along with other serials and forwards the decision to the catalogers. New serials selected for the collections are cataloged and card numbers assigned at that time. A change in the name of the serial or a change in the name of the issuing agency will mean the document will be recataloged and a new card number assigned. Selection of periodicals, in some cases, often must wait for a complete volume to be received before the value of the periodical can be determined. Once a serial has been selected and is being processed, we are notified of the card number assigned so that the number may appear in the next listing of the Checklist.

Each monograph which I select for cataloging is assigned a cataloging priority, ranging from one to six. State documents fall in the second and third priorities.

The interest of the States in having on file in LC the publications of at least their own State is increasing. The Library has prepared in cooperation with the Council of State Governments a

model state law to provide for the distribution of the various types of official publications. Specific provision in law for distribution of copies to the Library of Congress as well as to the libraries within the State would seem increasingly to serve a useful purpose. This model law is available on request from the Exchange and Gift Division.

We request your continued cooperation in having a sufficient number of all State publications promptly and regularly supplied to the Library of Congress and will continue to do our best to provide you with an accessions list that includes all the State publications we are able to obtain.